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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 8 NO. 9
FIRST ISSUE OF
JUNE 1978
#175

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LETTERS

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James B. Woods
Rochelle, Illinois

Congratulations, Mr. Russell, on an original cover idea (your first issue of May 1978, Volume 8, No. 7).

David P. Morgan, Editor
Trains Magazine
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Following your publication of my letter to you in RTN 172 I have heard from Amtrak. A cheque for $30 arrived with a most apologetic and concerned letter from Mr. Dennis Vorbau, Manager - Consumer Relations. This, together with an unaccompanied cheque for $15 which arrived in the meantime means that I have now received two refunds from Amtrak and I have already written to Mr. Vorbau offering to return one of these.

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University of Dublin
Dublin, Ireland

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Michael Jarel
Los Angeles, California

Rail Travel News, Vol. 8, No. 9 (Whole No. 175). First Issue of June, 1978.
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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $10.50 per year; single copy 45¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

ON THE COVER

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RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA'S new fares were praised by Transport 2000 Canada President Harry Gow this month. The consumer organization has been critical of VIA's plans to reduce passenger service on transcontinental runs. While Gow was still apprehensive about VIA's plans in this respect, he expressed confidence that the new fares, if implemented by CP as well as CN, could lead to "a new era in passenger train travel". Said Gow, "The new fares should help get families out of dangerous, overcrowded automobiles and on to safe, air conditioned trains." On runs of over 1000 miles, rail has 18% of the market, Gow said, and bus only 2%. The rest go by air and--more--by automobile. Transport 2000 said it was reacting positively to the new tariff because "it provides equal rates for equal travel distances, anywhere in Canada, thereby removing a great deal of geographical discrimination". However, it warned against any increases in the next year.

NOW'S THE TIME for travelers to ride the transcontinental trains in Canada. The schedules will remain for the summer the same as they were thru April. Travelers can still ride the two transcon trains (CN and CP) as they existed in the pre-VIA era. For this summer, rail travelers have the "best of both worlds"--full transcon service with new, lower fares. (High fares had driven many off CP's CANADIAN in the past.)

TRAVELERS FEELING DISCRIMINATED against because of VIA's new $3 minimum fare are advised to complain directly to VIA. The object of the minimum is to keep commuters off long-distance trains. VIA might give consideration to those outside commuter belts (for example, in roadless country areas) if they make known their problem.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY agreed to sell tickets at the new VIA fare levels as of Jun 15.

THE CN LINE in Northern Ontario needs once-daily, full-service trains, Transport 2000 told VIA this month. It is believed that the rail corporation is receptive to the idea, and letters supporting it should be sent to the Canadian Transport Commission.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION has ordered CP to continue regular weekend (up Fri night, down Sun night) service to and from Mont-Laurier, as well as Sunday service Jun 24-Oct 8 and Dec 9-Mar 18 on the "Petit Train du Nord" tourist train format. Future patronage of these will determine whether they are granted permanent status.

AYLMER ENERGY CONSERVATION Centre and Transport 2000 have gathered about 1600 signatures in favour of commuter train service in that area of Quebec, and they will soon be presented to the authorities.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON the fates of the following trains will be held in July by the CTC: Montreal-Chicoutimi (#170, 171, 172, 173); Quebec (Ste-Foy)-Chicoutimi (#176, 177, 199); Chambord-Dolbeau (#183, 184, 185, 186); and Quebec (Limoilou)-Riviere-a-Pierre (#275, 276). Hearings are in Chicoutimi Jul 10 & 11; Roberval Jul 12; Quebec Jul 17; St-Raymond Jul 18; Shawinigan Jul 19; and Montreal Jul 20. Hearings are at 10am except St-Raymond 9am. Contact the Railway Transport Committee, Ottawa K1A ON9, telephone (819) 997-7046.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS will be installed in all VIA passenger equipment, the corporation said, to announce station stops, on-board services, and delays of over three minutes.

CANADIAN NATIONAL LINE passenger traffic east from Montreal to the Maritimes is up 66% for the first 4 months of 1978, over 1977, reports Transport 2000.

DOMINION ATLANTIC RAILWAY'S Halifax-Yarmouth service may be abandoned. Rail supporters are now preparing for coming hearings on this run. Transport 2000 Atlantic points out that parent road CP has neglected this service, and gave it the highest surface transportation fares in North America--over 10¢ per mile. Contact the consumer group at 40 Lorne Ave., Dartmouth, N.S. B2Y 3E7.

VIA RAIL CANADA as of Jun 1 dropped the CN's Car-Go Rail service whereby one's automobile could be hauled on the same transcontinental passenger train. A firm in Vancouver, Trans-Canada Auto-Train Transport Ltd., will ship cars between Vancouver and Toronto in 7-12 days' time for $541, considerably higher than CN.

UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION survey of the E&N Dayliner run on Vancouver Island has found fares too high and the running time too long, with the train running consistently 30 minutes late.

CP RAIL SOURCES said in mid-June that CP will replace the "Princess Patricia" next year on the Alaska cruise service with the Nova Scotia-owned ship "Mercator One", now tied idle in Halifax. The B.C. government has shown some interest in purchasing the "Princess Patricia".

CP RAIL PROBABLY will halt carriage of passengers on its "Princess of Vancouver" 3 daily roundtrips between Vancouver and Nanaimo in October, to cut crew size.

"OUR TRANSCONTINENTAL SERVICES are uneconomic. But if VIA suggested they disappear, I say we'd better look for the nearest yardarm to be hanged from" VIA Rail Canada President Frank Roberts told a newspaper interviewer this month.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

THE SOUTH SHORE commuter line out of Chicago has been kept alive thru Dec 31 by an agreement signed Jun 13 by the Chessie-owned line and public transit officials. The Northwestern Indiana Commuter Transportation District is to pay Chessie about $1.8 million to cover its 1978 passenger deficit as well as the previous two years. The railroad agreed not to raise fares without the District's approval nor to petition for discontinuance before the end of 1978.

THE VANCOUVER B.C. area is considering legislation to establish a crown corporation, the Urban Transit Authority of B.C., to handle urban transit systems.

FLORIDA'S GOVERNOR ASKEW unveiled in Miami in May a full-size model of the 75-foot long rapid transit cars that will be used on the system now being developed.

EDMONTON, CANADA, TRANSIT will add extra service to handle crowds to the Commonwealth Games which run from Aug 3-12. No automobile parking is available near Commonwealth Stadium, scene of some of the principal events of the games.

FRANKLIN STREET SUBWAY line in Chicago is getting underway, with ground-breaking expected next year. The double-track line will replace the Wells-Van Buren elevated Loop and will serve three major buildings--Sears Tower, Merchandise Mart and Montgomery Ward headquarters. The 4.65-mile line will be 2/3 underground.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF on May 30 received the first of 36 new Highliner commuter cars from Bombardier-MLW Company. Completion of the first car in the Quebec plant was followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony there attended by over 1000 people.

AMERICAN MOTORS CORPORATION in a surprise move announced it was stopping the building of urban transit buses in late June, blaming the confusion of federal regulations concerning their design.

A BUDD SPV-2000 railcar began tests on the Milwaukee Road's Chicago commuter service on Jun 7.

THE FIRST REBUILT E-8 diesel locomotive, out of a total of 10, was finished at ICG's Paducah Shop about May 24, for the New Jersey DOT.

RICHARD S. PAGE, UMTA Administrator, issued a statement Jun 9 denying that he, "contrary to some rumors", had ever told a consortium of three cities to stop work on their plans to call for bids on the DOT-proposed Transbus. He said he "firmly opposes" a House amendment which would require more study of the bus and a 3-month in-service test to compare the effectiveness of a front door ramp with a low floor, and a lift device at either door with current floor heights.

AN UMTA GRANT of $165,000 to Portland, Oregon (also partly funded by the EPA) announced May 18 goes to develop a kit to quiet noisy diesel buses. Said UMTA Administrator R. S. Page, "The urban transit bus has long been known for the objectionable noise emissions that result from the diesel engine and the manner in which it is installed."

A BUS STRUCK the rear of a streetcar in a tunnel under Harvard Square in Cambridge MA the morning of Jun 2, injuring about 30 persons.

NEW YORK'S TRANSIT Authority finds that about a third of the trucks on its new R-46 subway cars have cracks and gouges. Manufacturer of the trucks, Rockwell International, is reportedly trying to modify them to solve the problem.

TRAINS AND TAXATION

The whole country is buzzing over the Jarvis-Gann Initiative (Proposition 13) passed overwhelmingly by California voters on Jun 6, and the media are saying that tax-cutting fever is sweeping the nation.

There are two aspects to this popular movement, as we can tell from our correspondence. One is that taxpayers want more control over their own money and their own lives, especially in this time of difficult inflation that hurts property owners and everyone else. The second is that there are some things that it wants the government to support and others that it wants cut.

The public wants passenger trains to survive and flourish. Our letters tell us that readers feel there are many less worthy areas of federal support that should be cut in order to preserve enough support for trains. Every day DOT releases arrive in our mail detailing the millions of dollars being spent for highways, for more airport planning--this in spite of the public opinion polls that show clearly that the people want to spend less of their money for more highways and airports and more for needed rail transportation.

The Administration doesn't seem to be getting this message. While money flows unabated into the over-funded and environmentally destructive modes of transportation, the DOT has the audacity to attempt to cut back our rail passenger system by nearly a third, to save a puny sum of money that would pay for only 2 or 3 miles of urban freeway yearly. The whole idea is outrageous.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ICC HEARINGS ON DOT PLAN FOR AMTRAK:

Alabama: Montgomery 6/27. Arkansas: Little Rock 7/6. California: Sacramento 7/12, L.A. 7/14. Colorado: Denver 7/6. D.C.: 6/26, 7/24. Florida: Jacksonville 6/29, Tampa 7/10, Miami 7/12. Georgia: Atlanta 7/12. Idaho: Boise 7/6. Illinois: Chicago 7/6. Indiana: Indianapolis 7/13. Iowa: Des Moines 7/12. Kentucky: Louisville 6/27. Louisiana: New Orleans 6/29. Massachusetts: Boston 7/7. Michigan: Detroit 7/12. Minnesota: St. Paul 7/10. Missouri: St. Louis 7/10. Montana: Butte 7/10, Havre 7/12. Nebraska: Lincoln 6/27, McCook 6/29. Nevada: Reno 7/10. New York: N.Y.C. 6/29, Buffalo 7/10. North Dakota: Bismarck 7/6, Fargo 7/12, Minot 7/14. Ohio: Cincinnati 7/6, Dayton 7/11. Oregon: Portland 7/6, Pendleton 7/14. Pennsylvania: Philadelphia 7/12. Tennessee: Nashville 6/29. Texas: Dallas 7/10, San Antonio 7/12. Utah: Salt Lake City 7/10. Virginia: Richmond 6/27. Washington: Spokane 7/10, Seattle 7/12. West Virginia: Martinsburg 6/27, Parkersburg 6/29, Bluefield 6/30. Wisconsin: Milwaukee 7/6. Wyoming: Cheyenne 7/12.

THE LITTLE TRAIN THAT COULD
by Robert Rynerson

One of the routes omitted from the DOT's Amtrak route "study" is the experimental PIONEER. Since the DOT used fiscal year 77 figures, only a few months of the train's operations were reflected in their calculations. In turn, the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR also did not show the connecting traffic's growth from this feeder service, which may have influenced Washington DC planners to want to axe it.

Many people familiar with the history of this route were not surprised to see the DOT recommendations, because theoretical planning exercises done in the East have repeatedly failed to see the line's potential. My favorite newspaper clipping is topped by a page-width banner headline trumpeting the findings of Amtrak's Marketing Department that the Portland-Boise-East train would average only 30-40 passengers per train mile. In fact, the DOT study shows that double that number rode the train in the first few months of operation.

What is most impressive about what is still not a "mature" figure is that it was gained in spite of very serious failures by the folks back at then L'Enfant Plaza. While Western Amtrak people thought they were running the CITY OF PORTLAND, some people 3000 miles away at L'Enfant Plaza thought they were running the Western version of the HILLTOPPER. In Oregon, Clark Cox looked at the crowds lining up in Portland's Union Station and called #25/26 "Amtrak's answer to 'Star Wars'". In Washington, they thought it was going to be "Bend of the River" on the Late, Late Show.

I looked at the tiny train sketched on the front of the introductory folder and thought of The Little Train that Could. At least, it was the Little Train that Would Have to Do for the Time Being. Not only did it lack a sleeping car, as expected, but also the previously-announced baggage car. Since the pre-Amtrak service on this route was a heavy one for mail and express traffic, the latter move was especially disappointing. Initially, the cross-connection in Ogden with #5/6 to allow Salt Lake City-Reno-Bay Area travel was also omitted. A saving grace was operation from Ogden to the Mormon center, insisted upon by Northwest backers of the service. A bus connection was almost installed instead, which would have sharply reduced the convenience of the service to the major trading center of the inland area. A parallel would be to bus passengers on the BROADWAY from Trenton to New York City.

A dark hint of things to come was the folder's continued references to the line as a self-contained Seattle-Salt Lake route. The early Amtrak airline mentality showed itself ("from endpoint to shining endpoint"), as the Ogden-East connection was ignored or glossed over in advertising. Despite being notified in advance (by Oregon DOT) that a thru tariff Portland-Ogden-Chicago should be published, Amtrak launched the service without such an arrangement. The combined fare on the new route as of Oct 30, 1977 was $159 one way. The same trip could be made via Seattle for $128.75, if one spent a night in Seattle each way. The one-way air coach fare from Portland or Seattle to Chicago was $154 plus tax. The route via Seattle is 10 miles shorter than the route via Ogden (due to the Cheyenne-Denver zigzag), but the saving was $3 a mile, enough to pay for a night in Senator Warren Magnuson's favorite big city.

As if print omissions were not enough, Amtrak's reservation computer did not like to think about the PIONEER either. Unless callers demanded to be given information about the Ogden route, info operators only gave the Chicago-Seattle-Portland data. I have tried this roughly every two months, and a variety of accents from French to mid-Atlantic have had to be coaxed into telling me about the Ogden connection. This was most ridiculous when operators were telling me that I would have to spend a night in Seattle to make the connection, on the Oct 30, 1977 schedule.

A year after its inauguration, the PIONEER is blossoming out. RTN's Train of the Year award was widely publicized in the Pacific Northwest, and may have shamed Amtrak into some improvements. Thus baggage cars and electric sleepers have appeared, as well as other improvements. The Ogden cross-connection has been scheduled. Budget squeezes give a good excuse for the limited advertising of the service. RTN reported that fares effective Apr 30, 1978 included a Northwest-Chicago thru fare.

But on Jun 14 I called Amtrak's toll-free reservation number again, and asked the pleasant-sounding-young-man's-voice for the Portland-Chicago one-way coach fare. He quoted me a figure of $154 via Ogden, after I asked for that route. His very first comment on Portland-Chicago thru fares had been "the EMPIRE BUILDER doesn't go to Portland." He had then quoted me a fare of $125 for the route via Seattle. I insisted as politely as possible that I had read that there was an inter-route fare between Portland and Chicago. He politely told me that there was no such thing.

I repeated the call later that day, hoping that I had reached a new employee. A pleasant-sounding-lady's-voice quoted a fare of $138.50 via Seattle. When asked about the fare via Ogden, she explained that it would be higher because of combining fares. I told her that I had read otherwise, and she put me on hold for a minute, and came back with the news that a thru fare of $120 was available. Since she had to leave the line to get the information, and since the "new" employee couldn't make the computer show him the answer to my question, is the computer programmed to mislead?

The COAST STARLIGHT went thru some similar stages in its transition from politically-forced "unneeded" route to become America's most popular long-distance train. No one in the West will forget that DOT planners omitted the route in the original Railpax plan. Sheer weight of numbers forced improvements for the traveling public. Perhaps that will be the PIONEER's story as well.

What is wrong with the conventional methods that have failed to predict the demand for such trains as the STARLIGHT and the PIONEER? Most likely the problem is that these projections always fall back on assumptions about the travel market which reflect the biases of the people cooking up the formulas. These assumptions become more and more suspicious when the jump from urban to interurban travel is made, and least reliable when dealing with rail and ship travel, where a number of intangibles enter.

There aren't very many people living along the PIONEER route. On the other hand, those who do are concentrated near the stations. There's an expensive freeway paralleling the rail line, but in the winter it is closed on some days, and miserable to drive on other days. Trading centers are spread far apart, making long drives or bus rides. And the scenery was made for domeliners. Amtrak's original schedule proposal called for an overnight run out of Portland, thru the Columbia Gorge and the Blue Mountains in the dark.

I have a slide that shows Tom Reinhard of Amtrak's Congressional Affairs Office standing on the shoulder of old U.S. 30 at a bend in the Snake River, looking across toward Idaho and the UP Oregon Short Line. We had parked our state motor pool car for a quick photo stop at the last view of Idaho from Oregon. The slide is as silent as that highway was. Reinhard may have been thinking about how low the population density was there. Or he could have been thinking about the compelling allure of this bold landscape, and the now-proven fact that it could put people on a train, whether or not a computer or the DOT liked it.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMID REPORTS THAT Conrail will need much more government funding than anticipated, the rail corporation's President and Chief Operating Officer, Richard D. Spence, was said to be leaving his position at once. The report of his leaving the post came Jun 26, and Conrail was said to be searching for a successor. Mr. Spence came to Conrail from the SP, where he was VP-Operations. Conrail had a deficit of $366.6 million in 1977 and $216 million for the first quarter of this year. The Wall Street Journal suggested that personal conflicts between Spence and Chief Executive Officer Edward G. Jordan may have helped trigger Spence's break with the rail corporation..... HARLEY STAGGERS' BILL has been passed by the House, on Jun 23. It would give Amtrak $768.25 million for the next fiscal year and prohibit any route discontinuances before Oct 1, 1979. The money would include $613 million in operating subsidies, $130 million for capital expenditures, and $25 million to retire loans. The bill now goes to a compromise committee that must square it off against a less generous Senate bill.....

* * *

AN ENGINE CREW on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED between Gallup NM and Winslow AZ gets a day's pay for working 1 hour and 57 minutes--$55.34 for an engineer, charged Chicago Tribune writer David Young in a Jun 24 article. Thirteen engine crews run the train on its 40hr and 35min journey, an average workday of 3hrs, 7mins, he said. He indicated that the public may demand a legislative solution to the failure to modernize work rules..... AT AMTRAK'S BOARD meeting of Jun 28, Amtrak President Boyd asked for direction on the SOUTHERN CRESCENT question--should Amtrak continue negotiations with Southern Railway? The Board decided that it should. An Amtrak spokesman said that Amtrak never really had broken off negotiations with the railroad, but the question of taking over the CRESCENT has been somewhat in limbo while the DOT plan is being considered..... POLLUTION CONTROL IMPROVEMENTS for Chicago and New Orleans were authorized by the Amtrak Board Jun 28. It will cost about $1.2 million to reduce fuel oil spills and repair fuel storage tanks in those locations..... AMTRAK PACKAGE EXPRESS will extend its service July 1 to include pickup and delivery for established customers in 25 cities, with more coming in about 6 months..... RIO GRANDE PRESIDENT Gus Aydelott is quoted in Forbes Magazine (May 15) as saying about his RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR "As long as we're running the thing, we might as well make friends instead of enemies." Soon, says the magazine, the Rio Grande will have the country's only nonsubsidized major passenger train..... EMPIRE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT project is diagrammed on page 16. This is from a folder given to passengers on the line to explain the work and the reasons for current delays. NARP Region II Director G. J. Gerard tells us that work is now underway to activate the Hoffmans branch thru downtown Schenectady. "The turnout at Hoffmans (about 10 miles west of Schenectady) was removed about 5 years ago. Running passenger trains thru downtown Schenectady will save at least 10 minutes, due to distance and speed restrictions on the freight lines. The turnout is now back in at Hoffmans, new welded rail is being installed, lots of ties being replaced, and new signal poles and cross-arms and wiring are being placed. It looks like it might be useable within a month or so"..... FORMER AMTRAK BOARD member Joseph MacDonald died on Jun 17 after a bout with cancer. His funeral was Jun 21 in St. Albans, Vermont. See James Ullman's tribute to Mr. MacDonald starting on page 13.....

* * *

WE HEAR REPORTS of poor relations between Amtrak engineers and Pullman-Standard engineers. The bi-level car production is reportedly being delayed by over 200 electrical and structural modifications being required by Amtrak, changes that came to light as needed in the Amfleet construction. Some of the changes are described as "petty".....

NEW MIAMI STATION was dedicated by Amtrak on Jun 20. Amtrak called the new facility, at NW 81st St and 37th Ave, the "most extensive project of its type in Amtrak's 7-year history." The modern-design structure cost $5.7 million and can accommodate 350 passengers and 269 parked cars. Amtrak district headquarters are located on the mezzanine. The northbound FLORIDIAN at 5:10pm on Jun 19 was the last train to use the old station, and the northbound SILVER METEOR at 9:10 the next morning was the first to use the new station. Besides these trains, the SILVER STAR serves the station. The Miami Herald did a feature article on the two stations on Jun 18. Baggage clerk Davis Singleton was quoted as saying "I been here 35 years, you know. But they been talking about moving out of this place nigh on to 20 years, and I'm glad they're finally getting round to doing it." The photo below, by G. W. Gerhart, shows the Amtrak FLORIDA SPECIAL outbound at the old station in Apr 1972, with Southern Pacific cars (SP2365 is visible) reflecting palms not of the Southwest but of the Southeast.....

* * *

THE WESTBOUND SHENANDOAH, train 33, derailed at 3:40am on Jun 26 at Morgansville WV, between Clarksburg and Parkersburg. Both Amfleet cars derailed but remained upright. The engine did not derail. There were 28 aboard the train, and one passenger was treated at a hospital and released. The cause of the accident is still unknown..... A RAGING STORM on the night of Jun 27 knocked out train signals between Landover and Perryville MD, delaying 5 trains. The northbound PALMETTO was delayed the most (1hr, 9mins) and the southbound CONGRESSIONAL the least (16 mins). The storm brought winds of 60mph with rain and hail.....

GOVERNOR HUGH CAREY of New York State announced on Jun 23 in Niagara Falls that the state plans to contract for facilities to permit the NIAGARA RAINBOW and the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS to be re-routed and extended to Niagara Falls. Amtrak is expected to agree to the proposal. It involves spending $6 million for Conrail to rehabilitate the Niagara Falls line, and $1.1 million in bonds as the state's share of rehabilitating the Exchange Street Station in downtown Buffalo and for a station stop in Cheektowaga NY. No deadline has been set for the work...

THE DOT PLAN for Amtrak is "not in the national interest and would lay the groundwork for Amtrak's demise" the National Ass'n of RR Passengers said in its latest (May) newsletter. At the same time it pointed out that Brock Adams is "the first Transportation Secretary since John Volpe to publicly defend the concept of a nationwide rail passenger network". NARP said that the larger system plan, Scenario E (see RTN, First May issue) is "perhaps the best part of the (DOT) report. It supports the longstanding argument of NARP and others, such as the states of California, Pennsylvania, and Florida, that service increases, not reductions, help the system to become more efficient. It is approximately the size of the present Amtrak system, but the routes are more carefully chosen." NARP said that with the addition of 4 routes--St. Louis-Little Rock-Laredo, New Orleans -Jacksonville, New Orleans-Mobile-Montgomery-Birmingham-Nashville, and Cleveland-Cincinnati--to Scenario E, the rail passenger organization would give it "unqualified endorsement"..... DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION is practicing a discriminatory policy toward Amtrak. It enthusiastically allows big cuts in airline fares to increase ridership while at the same time it wants Amtrak to raise fares, which would result in lower ridership (see also Mr. Wasiutynski's letter in our last issue). This is even less understandable when one considers that Amtrak riders already pay a higher portion of the actual costs of the transportation than do airline travelers..... WAS UNION PACIFIC the effective Washington lobbyist behind the recommended Amtrak cutback plan? An RTN source suggests this possibility, noting that the new plan (as in the original Railpax plan) leaves Union Pacific with no passenger service. In the more elaborate plans it even moves the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR onto Rio Grande tracks. Washington insiders say that UP is a much more effective lobbyist against passenger trains than SP, which has found its "loudmouth" objections to passenger runs counter-productive over the years..... THE UNION PACIFIC ran a 16-car passenger train, complete with two domes and 4 matched E units, from Portland to Hinkle OR on Jun 23 for dedication of the new 38-track retarder yard there. Many dignitaries, including Oregon Gov. Straub, attendedthe ceremonies..... THE LATEST DATE we've heard for re-opening of BN's Stampede Pass line thru the Cascades in Washington State is Jul 17. Thus far there has been little or no work-train activity, with a private contractor working weekdays only using trucks and earth-moving equipment.....

* * *

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR leaving Denver Jun 22 had a big summer load of 200, with well over 100 going all the way to Salt Lake. The westbound PIONEER was held two hours in Ogden for a late westbound SFZ. Normally the train won't hold more than an hour, but there were many transferring passengers, and the tight money situation at Amtrak has increased Amtrak's unwillingness to pay for overnight lodging..... CITIZENS FOR RAIL CALIFORNIA has formally endorsed the DOT's Scenario E (the most elaborate system studied) insofar as it relates to California services. On Jun 18 the CRC sent the ICC a document supporting the need for Los Angeles-Las Vegas service..... THE MONTREALER-CONRAIL collision reported last issue actually involved three trains, reports a Maryland reader. A train preceding the MONTREALER had engine trouble and stopped, he says. This caused the MONTREALER to stop in the next block and when the first train's problems were cleared up and it moved out, the MONTREALER began to have problems with its motive power and was creeping along when the Conrail commuter train rammed into it.....

CANADA'S "DISCOVERY TRAIN" goes on display in mid-July in Kingston, Ontario. Then for five years it will criss-cross Canada, visiting 20 cities and towns each year. The 15-car train carries 12 exhibit cars and is a project of the National Museums of Canada..... TRANSPORT 2000 INTERNATIONAL was formed Jun 3. A formal signing of a federatiOn agreement was held in Reims, France. The British, French and Canadian organizations of Transport 2000 participated, establishing an international federation to promote better public transportation, particularly rail. Transport 2000 was originally formed in Britain in 1972, with a

similar organization created in France in 1975, and the Canadian group in 1976. Negotiations are underway with similar organizations in Switzerland and U.S.....

A NEW DIRECTOR for the Northeast Corridor improvement project, Louis S. Thompson, was sworn in by FRA head John M. Sullivan on May 26. Mr. Thompson is an experienced transportation budget and policy planning analyst. The FRA said on Jun 19 that 14.8 million people are expected to ride the NEC by 1981, a 53% increase over 1977. He spoke before the House Government Activities and Transportation Subcommittee. By 1990, he said, about 21.8 people will be using trains in the Corridor, with a "beneficial impact" on energy use and traffic congestion. The project won't be completed by 1981 as planned, but NY-DC trip times of 2hrs, 40mins will be met then, he said. And trip time goals on the NY-Readville MA segment will be met, but final work on the 10 miles from Readville to Boston will be delayed because Massachusetts decided to finish work on commuter lines which parallel the corridor project, he said. The same House Subcommittee said on Jun 15 that DOT Secretary Adams may be steering the NEC project "onto a costly sidetrack." Chairman John Burton of California criticized Adams for refusing to attend Subcommittee hearings. Burton criticized the project for being behind schedule and costing more money than planned. In a strongly worded statement, Burton said that the project "is on the verge of becoming another example of government-raised expectations being sabotaged by government mismanagement." Burton's oversight panel called the hearings to examine reports of construction delays and their cost impact.....

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of Private Railroad Car Owners published the first issue of its newsletter in May, and is in the midst of a membership drive. The organization's address is PO Box 1211, Mountainside NJ 07092.....

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF Railroad might be acquired by Southern Railway, the Wall Street Journal reported Jun 28..... THE HIGHWAY LOBBY is now lobbying for money for repairing the nation's highways. The Federal Highway Administration estimates it could take $329 billion by 1990.....

* * *

AN ILLINOIS READER reports returning from a very enjoyable 10,800-mile Rail pass trip. The only snafu encountered was a rock slide blocking the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA between Billings and Livingston on Jun 1. The trains were turned and passengers bused between them. The westbound train was delayed 3 hours.....

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION on Jun 9 issued proposed regulations and definitions concerning services and facilities for the handicapped in transportation. Written comments must be received by the ICC within 90 days. The DOT will hold a hearing on this topic on Jul 26, and the ICC said it might hold a hearing in conjunction with that one..... LEWISTOWN PA STATION will be closed starting Jul 1 and the stop will be a flag stop for the NATIONAL LIMITED, trains 30/31. Passengers boarding should stand on the platform so the train engineer can see them. Tickets can be bought from the conductor..... URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS will be hit hard by California's Proposition 13. AC Transit in our area approved a budget Jun 28 that cuts schedules and personnel 40% and raises local fares from 25¢ to 35¢. A final fare decision comes Jul 12. The San Francisco Muni's fare increase was vetoed Jun 26 by city supervisors expecting state assistance.....

TWIN CITIES-DULUTH service will continue under state subsidy thru Nov 1978. Minnesota legislators on May 25 approved a $325,000 appropriation..... AN AMTRAK STOP in Sanger TX could come in September. Supporters there have been hard at work, and final hurdles are being cleared..... SOUTHERN CRESCENT HEARINGS before the ICC on Jun 14 saw NARP testifying that the train should be kept until Amtrak can takeit over. An ICC study found no adverse impact on the human environment if the train were discontinued..... MR. JOSEPH ZUCKER joined NARP's staff this month as Ass't Director. He was with the American Freedom Train Foundation.....

 Mailing date of this issue: June 30, 1978.

THE FATHER OF THE MONTREALER
by James M. S. Ullman

Joseph V. MacDonald, the principal proponent of restored railroad passenger service from Washington DC to Montreal, a former member of the Amtrak Board of directors, and most importantly a very genteel and genial man, died in a hospital near his Farmingdale, Long Island home on June 17.

It was Joe who in May of 1971 while commuting on the Long Island Rail Road read in the New York Times that Amtrak, thru a 403-B grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, had restored train service on the Inland Route, New York to Boston, via Hartford, Springfield and Worcester. His innovative mind sprang into action.

By way of background, Joe was the son of an engineer on the Central Vermont Railroad, and the product of a family in which working for the railroad was a way of life. He quickly combined his enormous knowledge of New England railroads with the recollection, derived from the courtship of his wife who lived in Palmer, Massachusetts, to develop the idea that Amtrak could also restore the Washington-Montreal service by running a train over the Inland Route to Palmer, detouring east from Springfield, Massachusetts, on the old Boston and Albany Railroad, and there switch the train onto the Central Vermont for the rest of its journey to Montreal. Joe knew the VC and B&A crossed each other at Palmer because he had seen the junction from the platform of the passenger station on the many occasions he had been in Palmer.

Joe evolved his proposal believing that the Boston & Maine Railroad would not run the MONTREALER on its more direct route. As events later developed, one of the pleasant surprises was the cooperative attitude of the B&M which does indeed run the train directly north of Springfield thru Northampton. Thus, the "Palmer detour" was never necessary. Accordingly, Joe prepared a very detailed proposal on the feasibility of a restored MONTREALER and submitted it to a number of sources including the Burlington Free Press. From there the story was given to the wire services and was subsequently published in several New England newspapers.

One of these articles came to the attention of a pro-rail passenger group which met regularly representing Chambers of Commerce along the Inland Route. It was discussed and I was asked to telephone Joe to obtain more information than the news story revealed.

My first conversation with this engrossing man was indeed exciting and informative. I soon realized that Joe was a dynamic personality with a storehouse of information. I invited him to our next Inland Route meeting at Springfield. Joe did come and so captivated the group that all of us became dedicated converts to the cause of restoring the MONTREALER.

It was about that time that thru Joe I came to know Carlton Monaghan, a St. Albans, Vermont attorney and a former railroad engineer. At that time Mr. Monaghan was the legislative director of the Vermont UTU. He presently serves as the NARP director from that state.

With Joe as the driving force and with invaluable help from Carl, a campaign to revive the MONTREALER was launched. During that 18-month period, culminating in the restoration of the train in September 1972, Joe built an insurmountable case for the restoration of the train. Despite the doubts, so characteristic of the negative thinkers in government, Joe by logic and fact overcame every adverse comment. For example, when government officials claimed the Vermont track would not hold a passenger train, Joe, thru Carl, produced affidavits of Central Vermont engineers

attesting that it would. When other officials claimed that the train always had low patronage north of Springfield, Joe went to the Interstate Commerce Commission records to show the patronage was, in 1966, the year of abandonment, much higher than Amtrak's projections, and at levels that justified restarting the service.

To make matters even more interesting, New York State began a campaign of its own to get the Montreal train and run it over the Albany Route. Indeed, the question soon became not whether there would be a Montreal train, but over which of the two alternate routes it would run. Without Joe, New England never could have won the contest.

Throughout this period a deep and lasting friendship was forged between Joe, Carl Monaghan and myself. Curiously, altho we worked together, the three of us were never together in the same place until a newspaper reporter interviewed us on the MONTREALER's inaugural run. The unswerving dedication, the energy, the knowledge, the drive and the intellectual brilliance that Joe brought to this monumental effort to restore the MONTREALER can never be adequately and fully stated. Suffice it to say, deep in his heart was an unbounded love of his native State of Vermont and the full understanding that this was Vermont's only and last chance to ever again see a passenger train.

It is not generally realized that Joe also initiated the idea of restoring the LAKE SHORE LIMITED. It was in a conversation with Joe that I urged him to compose a document suggesting that Cleveland's only hope of ever seeing a passenger train again (drawing upon our earlier successful effort with the MONTREALER) was to aim for service to Boston, rather than a New York train, which would compete with and partially duplicate the existing New York-Chicago BROADWAY LIMITED. Joe prepared, as usual, a masterful analysis suggesting Chicago-Cleveland-Boston service. This study was sent to Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, who fully appreciated the wisdom of Joe's astute approach and began the ultimately successful campaign to restore the LAKE SHORE LIMITED.

It was shortly thereafter that Joe, thru the efforts of many people, all of which were certainly unsolicited on his part, was appointed to the Amtrak Board of Directors. Indeed, there are others who can speak with greater knowledge than I about his contribution as an Amtrak Director to the cause of rail passenger service; however, I have reason to believe that they were indeed substantial, and again far greater than generally recognized.

I visited Joe in the hospital a week before his death. His mind was, as usual, singularly alert and his interest in rail passenger service was pervasive. He was deeply concerned about inaccurate figures in the recent DOT report on Amtrak's route structure, relative to the MONTREALER's purported poor performance. He had expressed the same sentiments in a letter which he sent me a few days earlier.

In all of his activities, Joe's outstanding qualities were a firm grasp of important facts and an all-dominating common sense combined with a presentation so scholarly that it overwhelmed even the most serious doubter. He was totally without rancor. It is not comforting to think, that as we face a new onslaught against the American passenger train, Joe will not be with us. But it is also comforting to know that while he will be buried in his native and beloved St. Albans, Vermont, his spirit will forever ride the MONTREALER and propel all of us who believe in the need for decent, improved and expanded rail passenger service to continue our efforts. Knowing Joe and working with Joe was not just an experience; it was an honor.

(THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF MR. MACDONALD'S LAST COMMENTS TO MR. ULLMAN ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE "MONTREALER":)

I don't intend to comment on the whole preliminary report, since this will be discussed by Congress and the public before anything final is decided.

Of course, I am gratified that the MONTREALER and the LAKE SHORE LIMITED are both included in the proposed system. These are both strong trains in terms of service rendered to the public.

However, one thing disturbs me about the presentation of figures relating to the MONTREALER's productivity. In terms of passenger miles per train mile, the average as shown on Table 5-2, for all long distance trains is 137, while the MONTREALER is shown as only 99, with a footnote reading, "Excludes intra-NEC passenger-miles and revenue but includes NEC train miles".

This is the most gerrymandered footnote I have seen since my college statistics courses. The correct figure is 215.

In Appendix C, "Operating Cost Estimating Methodology", by which all the figures in this report were purportedly developed, the formula arriving at the 215 is spelled out. The formula is wildly gerrymandered in the various tables. The formula reads:

> "It should be noted that the non-Corridor costs included all the expenses of long-distance trains operating in both NEC and non-Corridor service if the train had a restricted boarding policy. For those trains offering an unrestricted boarding policy, only the portion of costs incurred in non-Corridor service were charged to non-Corridor operations--the basic assumption being that the NEC would replace the train with substitute service to fill the time slot."

The first category is exemplified by the New York to Florida trains, which do not handle passengers who are not traveling south of Washington DC. Very properly all passengers, passenger miles and train miles all the way from New York to Florida are assigned to these trains, even tho they travel 226 miles on the NEC.

The Montrealer — le Montrealer

Montreal - Washington

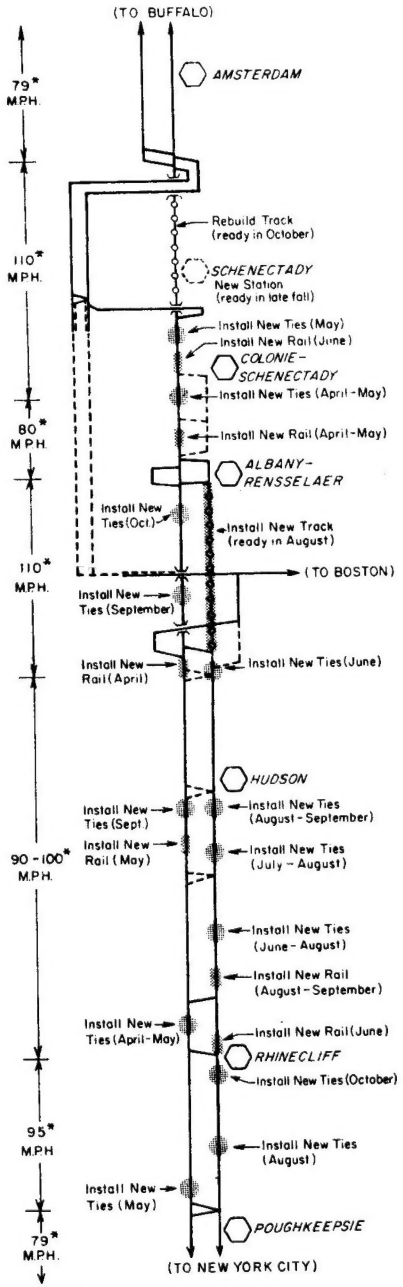
ALL - RESERVED TRAIN — RESERVATION OBLIGATOIRE

except New York—Washington

The MONTREALER exemplified the second category, in that it handles NEC passengers on an unreserved basis, runs several additional coaches and snack-bar coach between Washington and Penn Station, New York, and the train is prominently listed in the NEC Timetables.

Following the formula in Appendix C, the passenger miles (excluding intra-NEC passenger miles) would be as shown in all the tables (5-1, 5-2, D-10 and D-11), namely 48.62 million, which is based on the 309-mile segment extending beyond the NEC from Springfield to Montreal. However, completely contrary to the formula, the train miles shown in the tables include the 361 miles of NEC track as shown as 0.489 million, which cover the 361 miles of NEC track as well as the 309 non-NEC miles. Thus the train's performance is grossly distorted to a ridiculously low 99 PM/TM, whereas following the formula in Appendix C would yield the realistic 215 PM/TM. This distortion occurs in all the tables in the report, each with a sanctimonious footnote.

My fear is that when the subject of whose train is finally to remain in and whose is to be dropped is argued out, opponents of the MONTREALER may trumpet the gerrymandered figure of 99 PM/TM as evidence that the MONTREALER is a weak train. I want this information in the hands of those who will be defending the MONTREALER and ask that you see that it be placed diplomatically in their hands...



New York State's Track Improvement Program

● **Poughkeepsie to Schenectady (see illustration at left for this year's work locations).**

- Install continuous 160 miles welded rail (eliminates "joints" in track, thus permitting trains to travel at higher speeds).
- Replace 188,440 ties.
- Provide an additional track from Albany to Stuyvesant. This would provide at least a double track railroad between Albany and New York City thereby minimizing delays from other trains.
- Project cost $36 million.
- Route servcie via Schenectady resulting in schedule reductions west of Albany and new service to Electric City this October.

● **Objectives of Poughkeepsie – Schenectady Improvements**

- 30 minutes cut from travel time New York City – Schenectady (Hoffmans).
- 110 MPH maximum allowable train speed New York City – Albany corridor.
- Improved schedule reliability.

● **New York City to Poughkeepsie**

- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to begin track and signal work this summer (1978). Additional improvement consistent with improvements north of Poughkeepsie programmed over the next two years. When completed, scheduled time between New York City and Albany will be two hours.

PASSENGER SERVICE EXISTING
FREIGHT SERVICE ONLY
PASSENGER SERVICE FUTURE
NEW RAIL REPLACEMENT
NEW TIES REPLACEMENT

*Maximum allowable track speed after improvements are completed
Speeds vary depending on track curvature

New York State Rail Division
Department of Transportation 5/1/78

RAIL FANTRIPS

Jul 23: Brooksville Steam Special, Tampa to Brooksville FL. Clinchfield #1. $15, under 12 $12. SSAE to Tampa Bay Chapter, NRHS, PO Box 4034, Clearwater FL 33515. All-day trip. Lv Tampa 8:30am; ar 11:30 Brooksville lv 1pm; Tampa 4:05.

Oct 8-9: Foliage Express, New England's only special Amtrak fall foliage train Boston MA-Saratoga Springs NY. Photo runbys, state line tunnel, D&H shop tour. Fares $44-$88. Mystic Valley Rwy Soc., PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126; 361-4445.

Jul 14-16: SOUTHERN CRESCENT Nostalgia Tour Washington-Greensboro NC RT, set-out slprs at Greensboro, 2 #610 steam excursions, pre-departure dinner on train, etc. Price $132 up. Chesapeake Div, RR Enthusiasts c/o V.J. Campbell, 1110 Fidler Ln #1217, Silver Spring MD 20910.

Aug 26-Sep 10: Private car trip from Syracuse-Buffalo to Portland-Seattle-Vancouver & NRHS convention, using office car & sleeper; west via Amtrak, east via CN. Rates start at $895. Lehigh Black Diamond Ltd, Box 353, Syracuse NY 13201.

Jul 15: Montreal-Island Pond VT-Groveton NH-Berlin NH RT. Celebrate 125th anniversary of first major rwy line between Canada & U.S. Ceremonies at Island Pond. $29.90. St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 400, Cote des Neiges, Montreal.

One Fantrips listing is free. Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

CARS & CONSISTS

*HILLTOPPER, train 66, Alexandria VA May 27: engine 271 (F40PHR); cars 21008 (Amcoach), 20019 (Amcafe).

*NIGHT OWL, train 66, Washington DC May 27: engine 972 (E60); cars 21008, 20019, 21211, 21216, 2923 "Pacific Park", 1306 baggage, 1261 baggage.

*EL COSTENO, FCP train 2, Nogales, Mexico May 28: engines 602, 530; Correo 2506, Primera especial 1224, 1229, 1221 (new or rebuilt air-conditioned cars), Primera 1954 (no a/c), "Rio Mayo", "Sudan", "Jordania", "Rio Baluarte", "Rio Piaxtla", "Hungria" (coche comedor and salon cantina to be added at Benjamin Hill).

**"RUPERT ROCKET", CN train 10, leaving Prince Rupert May 29: engine 9164; cars 15409 heater car (VIA), 9486, 5530, 1349 diner-lounge, "Green Point" (VIA), 1133 "Emperor" (VIA), 5532 extra coach.

*LONE STAR, train 16, Kansas City May 11: engines ATSF 5912 (FP45), 524 (SDP), 536 (SDP, dead); cars 1156, 2760 "Palm Top", 8054 "Silver Chef", 9915, 9952, 9933, 3391, 2367 "Regal River", 1008 off at K.C., ATSF business car 55 (on at Topeka for Chicago), ATSF 54 (on at Topeka for Ft. Madison). 4½ hrs late, engine failure.

*NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 18, Seattle May 19; engines 265 (F40PHR), fuel car 400, 264 (F40PHR), steam car 672; cars 1551, 4890, dome 9480, 4546, dome 9482, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 8096, 2662 "Silver Prairie", 2674 "Silver Channel".

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, CN/VIA train 3, Edmonton Jun 13: engines 6501, 6607, 6610; cars 9636 bag, 5442, 5596, 5589 coaches, 752 cafe, 5730, 5723 Dayniters, sleepers "Edmonton", "Ethelbert", "Green Lane", dome lounge "Fraser", diner 1343, sleepers "Escuminac", "Entwistle", "Evelyn", dorm "Inwood", bus. car 93 for Princess Margriet of Netherlands Edmonton-Jasper.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"At $510 million a year, I think the time has come to leap up and pull the emergency stop cord. The passenger train is a 19th century invention that has been rendered obsolete by the airplane, intercity bus, and automobile and deserves oblivion... If Congress is worried about 'the Rail Lobby,' I think it consists mostly of a bunch of silly old men who like to dress up in engineer's caps and go 'whooo whooooooo'."

--Michael Kilian in Santa Ana (CA) Register, May 26

EXPRESS ADS

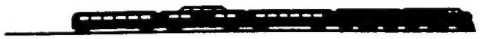
THE INTER-AMERICAN qualifies as the most incompetently operated route in the Amtrak system. Air conditioning failures and late trains (despite an absurdly padded schedule) were standard occurences for almost 4 years. Conveniences such as heated waiting rooms in winter, and platform lighting for nighttime train loading are STILL unheard of "luxuries" at major INTER-AMERICAN stations. If you believe that this train, OR ANY TRAIN, deserves a fair trial before being condemned as a hopeless money loser, we need your support. Join the Arkansas Ass'n of Railroad Passengers, 413 Brahma, Conway AR 72032. Dues start at $5/year.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL"

THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE PUBLICATION EVER PRODUCED BY RTN!

SOME OF THE QUESTIONS TACKLED IN THIS BOOK:

* The confusion of modalism and taxation in Federal thinking
* How does a bureaucracy such as we find in the passenger transportation industry function and how can one deal with it?
* The attribution of mental illness to riders of competing travel modes
* Why isn't the nation's bus system better integrated with rail service?
* Should conventional and non-conventional passenger cars be combined in Amtrak trains for economy and better service?
* What is at the heart of the difficulty of public funding for transportation?
* Could the National Park Service and other non-Amtrak agencies help to support rail passenger service?
* The question of electrifying conventional passenger cars



These and other topics are covered in a collection of articles by such authors as James Russell, Glenn Lee, Robert Rynerson and Kenneth Roch. The small-format, approximately 50-page book is edited by James Russell, Editor of RTN. Order your copy now. Orders will be filled in order received. The price is $3.95 per copy, plus 55¢ postage and handling--total price $4.50. (Tax is included in price.) Use the order form or write on a separate sheet if you don't want to clip up your copy of RTN. If the coupon is missing, write to: MESSAGE MEDIA, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Enclose $4.50 for each copy.

EXPRESS ADS

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TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

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As if print omissions were not enough, Amtrak's reservation computer did not like to think about the PIONEER either. Unless callers demanded to be given information about the Ogden route, info operators only gave the Chicago-Seattle-Portland data. I have tried this roughly every two months, and a variety of accents from French to mid-Atlantic have had to be coaxed into telling me about the Ogden connection. This was most ridiculous when operators were telling me that I would have to spend a night in Seattle to make the connection, on the Oct 30, 1977 schedule.

A year after its inauguration, the PIONEER is blossoming out. RTN's Train of the Year award was widely publicized in the Pacific Northwest, and may have shamed Amtrak into some improvements. Thus baggage cars and electric sleepers have appeared, as well as other improvements. The Ogden cross-connection has been scheduled. Budget squeezes give a good excuse for the limited advertising of the service. RTN reported that fares effective Apr 30, 1978 included a Northwest-Chicago thru fare.

But on Jun 14 I called Amtrak's toll-free reservation number again, and asked the pleasant-sounding-young-man's-voice for the Portland-Chicago one-way coach fare. He quoted me a figure of $154 via Ogden, after I asked for that route. His very first comment on Portland-Chicago thru fares had been "the EMPIRE BUILDER doesn't go to Portland." He had then quoted me a fare of $125 for the route via Seattle. I insisted as politely as possible that I had read that there was an inter-route fare between Portland and Chicago. He politely told me that there was no such thing.

I repeated the call later that day, hoping that I had reached a new employee. A pleasant-sounding-lady's-voice quoted a fare of $138.50 via Seattle. When asked about the fare via Ogden, she explained that it would be higher because of combining fares. I told her that I had read otherwise, and she put me on hold for a minute, and came back with the news that a thru fare of $120 was available. Since she had to leave the line to get the information, and since the "new" employee couldn't make the computer show him the answer to my question, is the computer programmed to mislead?

The COAST STARLIGHT went thru some similar stages in its transition from politically-forced "unneeded" route to become America's most popular long-distance train. No one in the West will forget that DOT planners omitted the route in the original Railpax plan. Sheer weight of numbers forced improvements for the traveling public. Perhaps that will be the PIONEER's story as well.

What is wrong with the conventional methods that have failed to predict the demand for such trains as the STARLIGHT and the PIONEER? Most likely the problem is that these projections always fall back on assumptions about the travel market which reflect the biases of the people cooking up the formulas. These assumptions become more and more suspicious when the jump from urban to interurban travel is made, and least reliable when dealing with rail and ship travel, where a number of intangibles enter.

There aren't very many people living along the PIONEER route. On the other hand, those who do are concentrated near the stations. There's an expensive freeway paralleling the rail line, but in the winter it is closed on some days, and miserable to drive on other days. Trading centers are spread far apart, making long drives or bus rides. And the scenery was made for domeliners. Amtrak's original schedule proposal called for an overnight run out of Portland, thru the Columbia Gorge and the Blue Mountains in the dark.

I have a slide that shows Tom Reinhard of Amtrak's Congressional Affairs Office standing on the shoulder of old U.S. 30 at a bend in the Snake River, looking across toward Idaho and the UP Oregon Short Line. We had parked our state motor pool car for a quick photo stop at the last view of Idaho from Oregon. The slide is as silent as that highway was. Reinhard may have been thinking about how low the population density was there. Or he could have been thinking about the compelling allure of this bold landscape, and the now-proven fact that it could put people on a train, whether or not a computer or the DOT liked it.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMID REPORTS THAT Conrail will need much more government funding than anticipated, the rail corporation's President and Chief Operating Officer, Richard D. Spence, was said to be leaving his position at once. The report of his leaving the post came Jun 26, and Conrail was said to be searching for a successor. Mr. Spence came to Conrail from the SP, where he was VP-Operations. Conrail had a deficit of $366.6 million in 1977 and $216 million for the first quarter of this year. The Wall Street Journal suggested that personal conflicts between Spence and Chief Executive Officer Edward G. Jordan may have helped trigger Spence's break with the rail corporation..... HARLEY STAGGERS' BILL has been passed by the House, on Jun 23. It would give Amtrak $768.25 million for the next fiscal year and prohibit any route discontinuances before Oct 1, 1979. The money would include $613 million in operating subsidies, $130 million for capital expenditures, and $25 million to retire loans. The bill now goes to a compromise committee that must square it off against a less generous Senate bill.....

* * *

AN ENGINE CREW on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED between Gallup NM and Winslow AZ gets a day's pay for working 1 hour and 57 minutes--$55.34 for an engineer, charged Chicago Tribune writer David Young in a Jun 24 article. Thirteen engine crews run the train on its 40hr and 35min journey, an average workday of 3hrs, 7mins, he said. He indicated that the public may demand a legislative solution to the failure to modernize work rules..... AT AMTRAK'S BOARD meeting of Jun 28, Amtrak President Boyd asked for direction on the SOUTHERN CRESCENT question--should Amtrak continue negotiations with Southern Railway? The Board decided that it should. An Amtrak spokesman said that Amtrak never really had broken off negotiations with the railroad, but the question of taking over the CRESCENT has been somewhat in limbo while the DOT plan is being considered..... POLLUTION CONTROL IMPROVEMENTS for Chicago and New Orleans were authorized by the Amtrak Board Jun 28. It will cost about $1.2 million to reduce fuel oil spills and repair fuel storage tanks in those locations..... AMTRAK PACKAGE EXPRESS will extend its service July 1 to include pickup and delivery for established customers in 25 cities, with more coming in about 6 months..... RIO GRANDE PRESIDENT Gus Aydelott is quoted in Forbes Magazine (May 15) as saying about his RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR "As long as we're running the thing, we might as well make friends instead of enemies." Soon, says the magazine, the Rio Grande will have the country's only nonsubsidized major passenger train..... EMPIRE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT project is diagrammed on page 16. This is from a folder given to passengers on the line to explain the work and the reasons for current delays. NARP Region II Director G. J. Gerard tells us that work is now underway to activate the Hoffmans branch thru downtown Schenectady. "The turnout at Hoffmans (about 10 miles west of Schenectady) was removed about 5 years ago. Running passenger trains thru downtown Schenectady will save at least 10 minutes, due to distance and speed restrictions on the freight lines. The turnout is now back in at Hoffmans, new welded rail is being installed, lots of ties being replaced, and new signal poles and cross-arms and wiring are being placed. It looks like it might be useable within a month or so"..... FORMER AMTRAK BOARD member Joseph MacDonald died on Jun 17 after a bout with cancer. His funeral was Jun 21 in St. Albans, Vermont. See James Ullman's tribute to Mr. MacDonald starting on page 13.....

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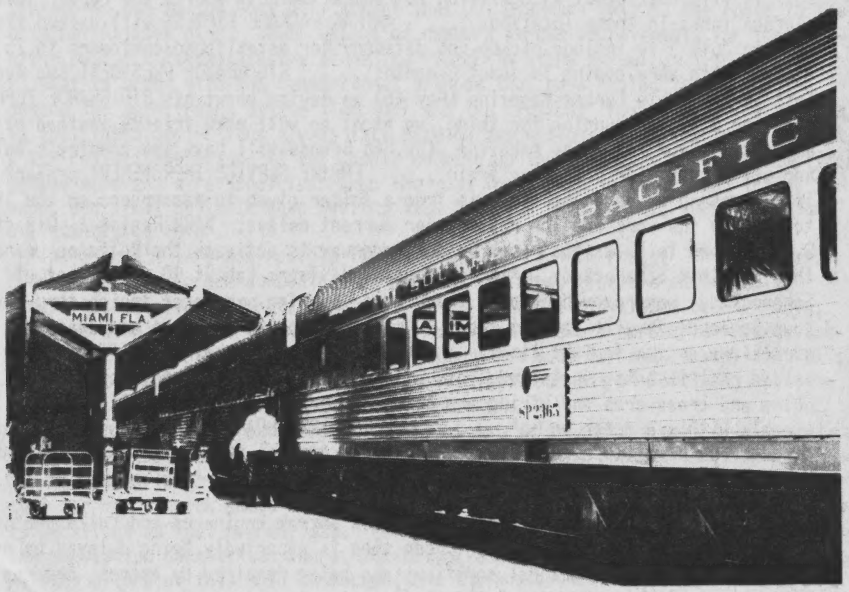
WE HEAR REPORTS of poor relations between Amtrak engineers and Pullman-Standard engineers. The bi-level car production is reportedly being delayed by over 200 electrical and structural modifications being required by Amtrak, changes that came to light as needed in the Amfleet construction. Some of the changes are described as "petty".....

NEW MIAMI STATION was dedicated by Amtrak on Jun 20. Amtrak called the new facility, at NW 81st St and 37th Ave, the "most extensive project of its type in Amtrak's 7-year history." The modern-design structure cost $5.7 million and can accommodate 350 passengers and 269 parked cars. Amtrak district headquarters are located on the mezzanine. The northbound FLORIDIAN at 5:10pm on Jun 19 was the last train to use the old station, and the northbound SILVER METEOR at 9:10 the next morning was the first to use the new station. Besides these trains, the SILVER STAR serves the station. The Miami Herald did a feature article on the two stations on Jun 18. Baggage clerk Davis Singleton was quoted as saying "I been here 35 years, you know. But they been talking about moving out of this place nigh on to 20 years, and I'm glad they're finally getting round to doing it." The photo below, by G. W. Gerhart, shows the Amtrak FLORIDA SPECIAL outbound at the old station in Apr 1972, with Southern Pacific cars (SP2365 is visible) reflecting palms not of the Southwest but of the Southeast.....

* * *

THE WESTBOUND SHENANDOAH, train 33, derailed at 3:40am on Jun 26 at Morgansville WV, between Clarksburg and Parkersburg. Both Amfleet cars derailed but remained upright. The engine did not derail. There were 28 aboard the train, and one passenger was treated at a hospital and released. The cause of the accident is still unknown..... A RAGING STORM on the night of Jun 27 knocked out train signals between Landover and Perryville MD, delaying 5 trains. The northbound PALMETTO was delayed the most (1hr, 9mins) and the southbound CONGRESSIONAL the least (16 mins). The storm brought winds of 60mph with rain and hail.....

GOVERNOR HUGH CAREY of New York State announced on Jun 23 in Niagara Falls that the state plans to contract for facilities to permit the NIAGARA RAINBOW and the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS to be re-routed and extended to Niagara Falls. Amtrak is expected to agree to the proposal. It involves spending $6 million for Conrail to rehabilitate the Niagara Falls line, and $1.1 million in bonds as the state's share of rehabilitating the Exchange Street Station in downtown Buffalo and for a station stop in Cheektowaga NY. No deadline has been set for the work...



THE DOT PLAN for Amtrak is "not in the national interest and would lay the groundwork for Amtrak's demise" the National Ass'n of RR Passengers said in its latest (May) newsletter. At the same time it pointed out that Brock Adams is "the first Transportation Secretary since John Volpe to publicly defend the concept of a nationwide rail passenger network". NARP said that the larger system plan, Scenario E (see RTN, First May issue) is "perhaps the best part of the (DOT) report. It supports the longstanding argument of NARP and others, such as the states of California, Pennsylvania, and Florida, that service increases, not reductions, help the system to become more efficient. It is approximately the size of the present Amtrak system, but the routes are more carefully chosen." NARP said that with the addition of 4 routes--St. Louis-Little Rock-Laredo, New Orleans-Jacksonville, New Orleans-Mobile-Montgomery-Birmingham-Nashville, and Cleveland-Cincinnati--to Scenario E, the rail passenger organization would give it "unqualified endorsement"..... DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION is practicing a discriminatory policy toward Amtrak. It enthusiastically allows big cuts in airline fares to increase ridership while at the same time it wants Amtrak to raise fares, which would result in lower ridership (see also Mr. Wasiutynski's letter in our last issue). This is even less understandable when one considers that Amtrak riders already pay a higher portion of the actual costs of the transportation than do airline travelers..... WAS UNION PACIFIC the effective Washington lobbyist behind the recommended Amtrak cutback plan? An RTN source suggests this possibility, noting that the new plan (as in the original Railpax plan) leaves Union Pacific with no passenger service. In the more elaborate plans it even moves the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR onto Rio Grande tracks. Washington insiders say that UP is a much more effective lobbyist against passenger trains than SP, which has found its "loudmouth" objections to passenger runs counter-productive over the years..... THE UNION PACIFIC ran a 16-car passenger train, complete with two domes and 4 matched E units, from Portland to Hinkle OR on Jun 23 for dedication of the new 38-track retarder yard there. Many dignitaries, including Oregon Gov. Straub, attendedthe ceremonies..... THE LATEST DATE we've heard for re-opening of BN's Stampede Pass line thru the Cascades in Washington State is Jul 17. Thus far there has been little or no work-train activity, with a private contractor working weekdays only using trucks and earth-moving equipment.....

* * *

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR leaving Denver Jun 22 had a big summer load of 200, with well over 100 going all the way to Salt Lake. The westbound PIONEER was held two hours in Ogden for a late westbound SFZ. Normally the train won't hold more than an hour, but there were many transferring passengers, and the tight money situation at Amtrak has increased Amtrak's unwillingness to pay for overnight lodging..... CITIZENS FOR RAIL CALIFORNIA has formally endorsed the DOT's Scenario E (the most elaborate system studied) insofar as it relates to California services. On Jun 18 the CRC sent the ICC a document supporting the need for Los Angeles-Las Vegas service..... THE MONTREALER-CONRAIL collision reported last issue actually involved three trains, reports a Maryland reader. A train preceding the MONTREALER had engine trouble and stopped, he says. This caused the MONTREALER to stop in the next block and when the first train's problems were cleared up and it moved out, the MONTREALER began to have problems with its motive power and was creeping along when the Conrail commuter train rammed into it.....

CANADA'S "DISCOVERY TRAIN" goes on display in mid-July in Kingston, Ontario. Then for five years it will criss-cross Canada, visiting 20 cities and towns each year. The 15-car train carries 12 exhibit cars and is a project of the National Museums of Canada..... TRANSPORT 2000 INTERNATIONAL was formed Jun 3. A formal signing of a federatiOn agreement was held in Reims, France. The British, French and Canadian organizations of Transport 2000 participated, establishing an international federation to promote better public transportation, particularly rail. Transport 2000 was originally formed in Britain in 1972, with a

similar organization created in France in 1975, and the Canadian group in 1976. Negotiations are underway with similar organizations in Switzerland and U.S.....

A NEW DIRECTOR for the Northeast Corridor improvement project, Louis S. Thompson, was sworn in by FRA head John M. Sullivan on May 26. Mr. Thompson is an experienced transportation budget and policy planning analyst. The FRA said on Jun 19 that 14.8 million people are expected to ride the NEC by 1981, a 53% increase over 1977. He spoke before the House Government Activities and Transportation Subcommittee. By 1990, he said, about 21.8 people will be using trains in the Corridor, with a "beneficial impact" on energy use and traffic congestion. The project won't be completed by 1981 as planned, but NY-DC trip times of 2hrs, 40mins will be met then, he said. And trip time goals on the NY-Readville MA segment will be met, but final work on the 10 miles from Readville to Boston will be delayed because Massachusetts decided to finish work on commuter lines which parallel the corridor project, he said. The same House Subcommittee said on Jun 15 that DOT Secretary Adams may be steering the NEC project "onto a costly sidetrack." Chairman John Burton of California criticized Adams for refusing to attend Subcommittee hearings. Burton criticized the project for being behind schedule and costing more money than planned. In a strongly worded statement, Burton said that the project "is on the verge of becoming another example of government-raised expectations being sabotaged by government mismanagement." Burton's oversight panel called the hearings to examine reports of construction delays and their cost impact.....

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of Private Railroad Car Owners published the first issue of its newsletter in May, and is in the midst of a membership drive. The organization's address is PO Box 1211, Mountainside NJ 07092.....

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF Railroad might be acquired by Southern Railway, the Wall Street Journal reported Jun 28..... THE HIGHWAY LOBBY is now lobbying for money for repairing the nation's highways. The Federal Highway Administration estimates it could take $329 billion by 1990.....

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AN ILLINOIS READER reports returning from a very enjoyable 10,800-mile Rail pass trip. The only snafu encountered was a rock slide blocking the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA between Billings and Livingston on Jun 1. The trains were turned and passengers bused between them. The westbound train was delayed 3 hours.....

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION on Jun 9 issued proposed regulations and definitions concerning services and facilities for the handicapped in transportation. Written comments must be received by the ICC within 90 days. The DOT will hold a hearing on this topic on Jul 26, and the ICC said it might hold a hearing in conjunction with that one..... LEWISTOWN PA STATION will be closed starting Jul 1 and the stop will be a flag stop for the NATIONAL LIMITED, trains 30/31. Passengers boarding should stand on the platform so the train engineer can see them. Tickets can be bought from the conductor..... URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS will be hit hard by California's Proposition 13. AC Transit in our area approved a budget Jun 28 that cuts schedules and personnel 40% and raises local fares from 25¢ to 35¢. A final fare decision comes Jul 12. The San Francisco Muni's fare increase was vetoed Jun 26 by city supervisors expecting state assistance.....

TWIN CITIES-DULUTH service will continue under state subsidy thru Nov 1978. Minnesota legislators on May 25 approved a $325,000 appropriation..... AN AMTRAK STOP in Sanger TX could come in September. Supporters there have been hard at work, and final hurdles are being cleared..... SOUTHERN CRESCENT HEARINGS before the ICC on Jun 14 saw NARP testifying that the train should be kept until Amtrak can takeit over. An ICC study found no adverse impact on the human environment if the train were discontinued..... MR. JOSEPH ZUCKER joined NARP's staff this month as Ass't Director. He was with the American Freedom Train Foundation.....

 Mailing date of this issue: June 30, 1978.

THE FATHER OF THE MONTREALER
by James M. S. Ullman

Joseph V. MacDonald, the principal proponent of restored railroad passenger service from Washington DC to Montreal, a former member of the Amtrak Board of directors, and most importantly a very genteel and genial man, died in a hospital near his Farmingdale, Long Island home on June 17.

It was Joe who in May of 1971 while commuting on the Long Island Rail Road read in the New York Times that Amtrak, thru a 403-B grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, had restored train service on the Inland Route, New York to Boston, via Hartford, Springfield and Worcester. His innovative mind sprang into action.

By way of background, Joe was the son of an engineer on the Central Vermont Railroad, and the product of a family in which working for the railroad was a way of life. He quickly combined his enormous knowledge of New England railroads with the recollection, derived from the courtship of his wife who lived in Palmer, Massachusetts, to develop the idea that Amtrak could also restore the Washington-Montreal service by running a train over the Inland Route to Palmer, detouring east from Springfield, Massachusetts, on the old Boston and Albany Railroad, and there switch the train onto the Central Vermont for the rest of its journey to Montreal. Joe knew the VC and B&A crossed each other at Palmer because he had seen the junction from the platform of the passenger station on the many occasions he had been in Palmer.

Joe evolved his proposal believing that the Boston & Maine Railroad would not run the MONTREALER on its more direct route. As events later developed, one of the pleasant surprises was the cooperative attitude of the B&M which does indeed run the train directly north of Springfield thru Northampton. Thus, the "Palmer detour" was never necessary. Accordingly, Joe prepared a very detailed proposal on the feasibility of a restored MONTREALER and submitted it to a number of sources including the Burlington Free Press. From there the story was given to the wire services and was subsequently published in several New England newspapers.

One of these articles came to the attention of a pro-rail passenger group which met regularly representing Chambers of Commerce along the Inland Route. It was discussed and I was asked to telephone Joe to obtain more information than the news story revealed.

My first conversation with this engrossing man was indeed exciting and informative. I soon realized that Joe was a dynamic personality with a storehouse of information. I invited him to our next Inland Route meeting at Springfield. Joe did come and so captivated the group that all of us became dedicated converts to the cause of restoring the MONTREALER.

It was about that time that thru Joe I came to know Carlton Monaghan, a St. Albans, Vermont attorney and a former railroad engineer. At that time Mr. Monaghan was the legislative director of the Vermont UTU. He presently serves as the NARP director from that state.

With Joe as the driving force and with invaluable help from Carl, a campaign to revive the MONTREALER was launched. During that 18-month period, culminating in the restoration of the train in September 1972, Joe built an insurmountable case for the restoration of the train. Despite the doubts, so characteristic of the negative thinkers in government, Joe by logic and fact overcame every adverse comment. For example, when government officials claimed the Vermont track would not hold a passenger train, Joe, thru Carl, produced affidavits of Central Vermont engineers